



# Entanglements

The Intertwined Fates of Whales and Fishermen

by Tora Johnson

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Contact Agnes Birnbaum, Publicist

Agnesbirnbaum@aol.com/ (212) 534-2768

**Centuries of whale-human interaction have led to the crisis explored in this engaging, intimate tale about the battle between conservation, tradition, and economics in the waters of North America's eastern seaboard.**

"Tora Johnson has a knack for storytelling, but also a sense of balance in her reporting and an evident commitment to truth-telling. In this compelling book, she confronts one of the thorniest, most searing wildlife-human conflicts of the day."

-- Randall R. Reeves, chairman, Cetacean Specialist Group of the World Conservation Union, and author of *National Audubon Society Guide to Marine Mammals of the World*

Entanglements explores the clash of cultures and personalities among fishermen, scientists, and whale advocates struggling to save both the endangered North Atlantic right whale and the livelihoods of thousands of Atlantic coastal families. By most counts, about 300 of these whales remain in the North Atlantic, and scientists warn that collisions with fishing gear are contributing to their decline. The political climate that surrounds the world's most endangered large whale is contentious, complex, and heartrending. Without pointing fingers or laying blame, Tora Johnson explores every side of the issue. She takes us to sea with fishermen who struggle to stay in business, setting traps and gillnets in the whale's habitat, and with members of the rescue teams who attempt to cut away deadly rope and net from whales in the wild. Weaving their stories and her personal observations into a discussion of the science and history of the conflict, she offers an admirable balance of perceptions, backgrounds, and agendas.

Her thoughtful discussion of the plight of fishermen and whales and of the frustrations between fishing communities and conservationists presents an authentic microcosm of the global conflict between human demands on the environment and nature's finite capacity for supporting those demands.

## About the Author

Tora Johnson teaches human ecology and geographic information science at College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine. She has served on the adjunct faculty of University of Maine at Machias, Massachusetts Maritime Academy and Cape Cod Community College. Also a freelance writer, ship's captain, and former commercial fisherman, Johnson was the marine reporter for the *Martha's Vineyard Times* from 1998 to 2000. She is the author of *Guide to Freshwater Animals without Backbones* with Arlene D'Strulle.